

# THEOSOPHY IN ACTION



Quarterly Official Organ of The Theosophical Society in Europe—Federation of National Societies

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## Extract from the Presidential Address to the 95th Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society

By N. Sri Ram, President

As long ago as 1889, with all the developments of the present century still in the future, H. P. Blavatsky referred to this period of the world's history as one of "mental increase and spiritual decrease." The evidence of this statement is all about us today. We are witnessing the high noon and triumphs of the human mind, or to be more precise, the scientific, analytical mind, which for all its achievements cover only the outer aspect of things, even when it seems to penetrate to their core, as in the discovery of the elementary particles, and is able to determine the number of vibrations in an atom. All the knowledge that has come through modern Science, as well as a large part even of the knowledge that pertains to what is termed "occult," in so far as it only enlarges the pattern of the phenomenal world and fills it with more detail, cannot effect in man the deep change that is needed to make him the self-contained yet inwardly unfolding, joyous and wise being that he can be. He is today far from being in such a condition, suffering as he does from acute discontent, frustrations and tension, wars and neuroses, violence in every form, in emotions as well as action, more than at any previous time.

The increase of knowledge and its diverse applications excite and goad the human mind into a tempo of activity hitherto unknown. This increased activity has given rise to a continuous increase of inventions, explorations, knowledge and applications of knowledge. The whole bent of the human mind is more and more towards the objective world and its multifarious phenomena. It is not confined to the gaining of knowledge and the achievements made possible by it, but also towards the gaining and enjoyment of power and other sensations which the new world conditions have brought within the field of our personal lives.

Thus, with all the developments of one sort and another, whether in themselves good or bad, there has been set up in the whole nature of man a centrifugalism which arouses his vitality and makes him dynamic, but only at a certain level and in a blind headlong manner. This development has led to his breaking away from his previous moorings, the restraints of tradition, the guidance of religious beliefs, adherence to the virtues they inculcated, and the respect for those who exemplified those virtues. Under the stress of the outward-moving impulses, he has in reality moved away from himself, that is, from that inner condition which would still exist if he had not been subjected to the new forces. He is now so involved in reactions of one sort or another that he has neither the time nor the inclination to assess their nature or even notice them in relation to his conduct. He does not realize how he is being shaped, twisted and dis-equilibrated by them, thus making his own existence a problem both to himself and to society at large. It is this condition of man and modern society, the problem of the knowledge he has gained, knowledge of a certain sort, mixed up and interacting with violent instincts in himself, hitherto kept submerged or under control, that our Society's work has to take into account.

The Divine Wisdom we call Theosophy is not meant to be mere head-learning; in its true nature it is soul-wisdom, a distinction clearly made by H.P.B. in *The Voice of the Silence*. It is as much the science pertaining to the nature of the knower, that subjective being which suffers so many transformations, a nature which remains for the most part concealed as an unexplored and unperceived ocean. It is as much *Atma Vidya*, as it was called of old, as it is the science of an occult universe extending far beyond the bounds of what modern Science can reveal with its present methods and implements.

We have to present this Wisdom in a manner which makes it practical and relevant to the problems of life, particularly the problems of the present time, and also reveal it in all its attractiveness, its native beauty, breadth and depth. In order to be able to do so, we must ourselves first approach the task with an understanding marked by this aim and quality. It is obvious that we cannot help others to a comprehension that will solve their problems if we ourselves have not in some measure experienced their solution. Therefore, I feel that the work, especially in this period of a fateful transition, must be of such a nature as to change ourselves as much as it is work aimed at helping others. The distinction between these two aspects of the work will, however, vanish to the extent that we are inspired by that altruistic spirit which is the hallmark of Theosophy in all the pursuits in which we engage as Theosophists.

Let us go ahead, then, each with such tasks as come to his hands, spreading the Wisdom as best he can, stressing most of all what is most vital for right conduct and right living, but at the same time bringing about in himself the clarity needed for right understanding, and opening himself to whatever new intimations of Truth may dawn upon him in that condition. Our own inner horizons and sky have to be free from the fogs and confusion which are so marked a feature of the present time.

Progress as understood in the world at large is at present mainly outwards, but it is also slanted downwards, metaphorically speaking. Yet the present time can be a turning point. The needle must turn upward and inward. "Inward" does not mean towards a condition of self-involvement, which is isolation in a prison, but towards those depths which lie concealed in our own pure nature, of which we become cognizant and to which we gravitate only as that self is put aside. Those who call themselves Theosophists must be among those who make this change possible.

### Important Notice

Owing to the recent rise in postage rates, we very much regret that we have no alternative but to increase the price of this paper, since nearly all the copies are despatched by post.

The price from now on will therefore be 50p or \$1.20 per annum (12½p per single copy).

## The influence of Theosophical Thought on our present time

EXTRACTS FROM A TALK BY ROBERTO HACK, General Secretary in Italy

It is opportune to recall that the period in which the Theosophical Society started operating was governed by the positivist and materialistic doctrines of science on the one hand, and on the other by the most narrow religious bigotry, as a consequence of which it was indeed an arduous task to place once more before our civilization the ancient esoteric doctrines. If we were to consider all this from a higher point of view, it would become quite clear that the Theosophical Society has accomplished a truly titanic work. It is not possible to judge what has been done by our Society by looking only at the outer facts as they appear on the physical plane; it is above all necessary to think of the occult action which takes place through the power of thought and of feeling.

The theosophical teachings given by our great Instructors about the real constitution of the Universe and the intimate occult constitution of the human being, the laws of Karma and Reincarnation, by means of which evolution is confirmed, form a complex of knowledge far superior to the ideas commonly acquired in the field of science. The ideal that Theosophy presents has wrought wonders. It has succeeded in bringing together in a Society such as ours human beings belonging to all races and religions, united by the common ideal of Brotherhood, and who, scattered around the world though they be, have realised individually the existence of powerful spiritual forces, the vibrations of which radiate over the entire universe.

The most important part of Theosophy's action takes place, in fact, upon the subtler planes of thought and emotion, because those radiations influence the whole of mankind, but especially those who are able to feel them and place themselves, be it only unconsciously, in harmony with them. The effect of this action becomes thereafter manifest in the outer activity of the ordinary world. Thus we have, for instance, the United Nations Organisation that confirms in its Constitutional Charter the principles of the Theosophical Society. There are also various other organisations that equally affirm the principle of Universal Brotherhood, overcoming the barriers of race, religion, nationality, etc., etc. Some may think that the Theosophical Society has played no part in this, but we must not forget the occult power of thought. Once that theosophical thought and feeling have become the essential force in a person's life, the individual, though he may not be aware of it, passes into the atmosphere around him powerful vibrations which are picked up by those who are able to receive them. It is of no importance that this influence should not be attributed to the Theosophical Society. If we try to live our ideals in the best way possible, we shall really become suitable channels for the transmission of these forces into the outer world. It is not easy to raise one's consciousness to the higher level, where the influx from the *buddhic* plane can be felt. Deep within the human soul there lies a germ, a latent sense which, under the influx of spiritual energy, gradually matures, till it finally comes to blossom in the light of Truth. Human beings, united in national and international

groups, form real occult centres of spiritual energy, that are capable of contributing far more than a single individual could. Many of us know that these groups, imperfect though they may be, help to emanate higher energies. In the same way that high tension energy requires transformers in order to be used for practical purposes, so also the Great Beings who send forth these spiritual energies, require individuals who can act as current transformers, in order to exercise this occult influence upon the whole of mankind. We should not overlook the importance of such an influence but understand that, in order to make ourselves fit for a work of this kind, we must first of all change our own nature.

Even though we may be well aware that the present times are very unsatisfactory in many ways, this is only the negative side of things, to which positive forces are being opposed. The creative and conscious power of thought is a positive thing, while the destructive or evil power is negative.

We are at present going through a really crucial period. A new era is in the making, and this period of gestation is characterised by the gradual development of a new faculty; the faculty which the French philosopher, Henri Bergson, called 'intuition.' Intuition comes from the *buddhic* plane, and is the faculty that is just now beginning to flower among the elect of mankind. The Theosophical Society is like a magnet that attracts the souls in which the germ of intuition is beginning to awaken. This new faculty is coming into play in all fields and, no matter how slowly, the time will come when it will permeate our entire civilization, whose essential characteristic will then be a far more effective brotherhood than the present one. We have different parties, different social and religious organisations, but in all of these everywhere this same irrepressible impulse is active.

Our great Founders declared that the Theosophical Society is the organism destined for the preparation of the new world and each one of us must contribute towards the practical realisation of this high ideal according to his possibilities. Those who join our Society do so in response to an inner call; if each one of us were truly to live in accordance with such principles, the influence exercised by the Theosophical Society on the world would be far greater; but that depends upon all the members and not only on the Heads. Each one of us must feel it a duty to work for the good of humanity, to unite our efforts with those of the main workers, in order to hasten the realization of the aims of our Society. The way has been pointed out to us, but we have to tread it ourselves, working not for ourselves but for our brethren, in order to help them on the upward path.

Theosophy has had a deep influence upon modern thought, and this must be taken properly into account, also because it has contributed largely to the new principles of education. Giuseppe Mazzini used to say that only a proper education could produce wise citizens, aware not only of their rights, but above all of their duties. And Psychology is fundamental in the field of education. Without a precise

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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY  
IN EUROPE

FEDERATION OF NATIONAL SOCIETIES  
Theosophy in Action

### WHY SUMMER SCHOOLS?

DURING 1971 SUMMER SCHOOLS WILL again be held in the various European regions. They will be attended by keen members who know from experience the value of such gatherings. But it is not enough to have the support of the old stalwarts, who in any case diminish each year in the course of nature. Conferences of Theosophists are important for all members of the Society. Some are of course precluded from attending by their special circumstances, domestic or financial, limitations that must be accepted with the hope that someday they may ease or vanish altogether.

But what of all our other members? People join the Theosophical Society for different reasons: perhaps the attraction of the Objects, particularly the First Object; or the opportunity to study matters of high import that are not otherwise available; maybe a philosophy that puts life, death, the universe and man in reasonable perspective; or a way of life that can bring inner peace and fulfilment. One might argue that any of these lines can be followed by members individually. True, members can study, meditate, have goodwill to others, by themselves. Yet study becomes easier and more profitable by exchange of ideas in a group and a combined effort to understand something of the philosophy.

Moreover, a tolerant attitude towards others remains purely theoretical and nebulous when it is directed to people one never sees. It can become practical only when positive kindness is maintained to those near at hand whose ways may cause annoyance, frustration or worse. There is no test of goodwill in isolation. Here is the value of Lodges and other groups. Theosophists can hardly begin to form a nucleus of universal brotherhood if they do not meet, mingle, talk with, work with other members and make no distinction between their beliefs, colour, class, race, sex and age. When a group has most of these ingredients and can preserve kindness, when differences of opinion freely voiced do not impair goodwill and unity, that group is doing its job and forming a miniature nucleus in accord with the First Object.

Where can one find such nuclei? Alas, they are rare, but they do exist here and there, and in them lies the hope for the future of the Theosophical Society. If our Lodges could only be what the whole purpose of their foundation intended them to be, then our Society would make a tremendous, though quiet, impact on the world. It would be a most potent spiritual force.

Summer Schools and Conferences should help towards this end. In the wider setting of the larger gatherings of members from many spheres and perhaps many lands, true brotherhood and unity are often profoundly experienced. Members go back with new inspiration and greater strength to their local efforts, more able to face the many difficulties. Study, lectures, discussion are most useful at Summer Schools, but their highest value is not at the intellectual level. It is at the 'feeling' level which lifts men and women out of their personal lives for a while into group consciousness of a pure impersonal nature—a true nucleus. This is what no member should miss whose circumstances permit him to be present.

### ST. ANDREW'S SUMMER SCHOOL

Readers are reminded that the outstanding lectures not reported by us are being printed in full in *The Theosophist*, and are well worth close study.

## We and Reality

Extracts from a Talk to the Summer School in Hustedt by Beate Mattern

According to H. P. Blavatsky, 'Theosophy,' by its very nature, is indefinable. It is left to each individual to push forward to an understanding of the essential content and the special meaning of the word Theosophy—in his own way and independently of what is thought to be the recognized 'Teaching.'

The displeasure of the theosophists was first of all directed against the dogma and superstition of the Church—today we must rather define our attitude towards the presumptions of Science, against the exclusivity of the demonstrable, against wishing to be confined by the short-circuiting of Reality in rationalist realism. The collection of facts, data and information alone by no means leads to a conscious understanding of the relationship of realities with ideas and principles. Only experience on all seven Planes fulfils with scientific significance what we know of Reality.

To pose new questions and to consider unflinchingly new possibilities, such as would lead to unprecedented solutions from new standpoints for the eternal problems of humanity, requires creative ability and characterizes true, 'real' science, as well as its freer, but equal sister, Theosophy.

We must not forget that Speech is part of Revelation, and that it is effective, realized Aspiration.

Therefore, whoever wishes to be understood must learn to speak the language of others and to furnish proof of the unutterable, both in intellectual and foreign expressions and in quite simple phrases, so that, if not everybody, at least many may understand.

It must not trouble us that the shadow of outside things seems to overcast the kernel of Reality. We Theosophists know the power of thought and the permanence of thought-forms. But I fear that we ignore the requirements of the day if we let things take their course when thinking about want and misery, hunger and juvenile delinquency, kidnapping and drug-addiction, etc.

In the last analysis, the yardstick for us is surely the influence day by day on the total thought of the world, to illumine and enlighten, nevertheless 'we,' every member, every student of Theosophy, are responsible for the Whole. That sounds hard. If we think it out to the end, we come inevitably to the Law of Cause and Effect, to that which we call Karma.

Karma is Reality, and Reality means to keep one's eye on the whole Aeon throughout life. To devote oneself to a branch of knowledge or an activity one-sidedly, like one possessed, without considering how this might affect other spheres of knowledge or life, always signifies destruction.

We theosophists regard all aspects of Nature, the physical and biological, as well as the psychological, social and cultural, as one natural continuum. This is what we call 'modern,' that is contemporary, forward-looking science; and not only we, but people in general, already include telepathy, clairvoyance and other parapsychological phenomena. The tendency, for example, from physics towards metaphysics, that is to push from the three-dimensional 'reality' into the fourth dimension, takes as its point of departure not what is to be done, but how it is to be done, and that, of course, sounds very familiar to us.

The powers of destruction grow out of the machinations that surround us on another level: cold, hateful conflicts of interests, promises not observed, broken contracts, tendentious accusations sow bitterness and doubt in constant readiness for fearful discharge. Distrust colours the mutual relations between the individual and the State, between young and old. Neither the wise, nor the seer, nor art, nor the Church determine values, but ideologies, dialecticians, critics, analysts. But out of theory grows no real, true insight into Reality and no permanent effect on Reality can thereby be achieved.

Although the consciousness of the existence and effect of demonic powers seems to be extinguished, we cannot help thinking of them in view of the powerful forces that foment and work in the

depths of the soul. They lead thought and action merely to the realisation of apparent and hidden wishes and needs, to the actualisation of tendencies but also of aversions, to the satisfaction of desires and impulses.

It is true that the speed, range and exactness of reasoning power may be increased by practice, by drugs and in the extreme pressure of a competitive society, but the real limits of the power of judgement do not lie within the reasoning powers, but in the conditions that are the basis of all thought processes, that is in the recognition of causes that precede effects, whereby the when plays no part, and in the awareness of a Reality that envelops our petty realisms, however hard they push to the fore.

Pure scientific thought, purposeful, but non-utilitarian, humble and selfless for the benefit of humanity, at least during the process of thought not calculating the chances for success: this noble science is in reality closer to art than to system, for new ideas are seldom inferred, they arise from creative imagination and are received as visions.

The recognition of an all-embracing reality and immanent conformity to natural laws makes us reluctant to rely on our freedom, our free will. But as has been said, the decision left to us is at least that of 'Yes' or 'No,' of 'Good' or 'Evil,' but even this freedom seems too great a burden for us.

Our subject 'We and Reality' in no way challenges us to a confrontation between 'We' and 'Reality.' In truth, Man derives his power to say 'No' from the security of the unique 'Yes' that is the God in Man.

God and Man belong together. Oblivion and fear, those powers that ever threaten us, cannot violate this sublime, age-old principle, so long as we are aware of the place where we are, and so long as we realize what may happen if we do not remain aware, that is if we do not realize God in ourselves.

So long as the outer reality of activities veils the inner Reality of unimagined space, we call it Maya, knowing full well that were the totality of Reality unveiled, it would be unbearable for mortals. The veil of Maya, like that of the Dream, partakes of both worlds. Engrossed in it we occasionally and in a flash see into the heart of the unity of the Real and its power.

One might say that Karma has placed us vertically between two realities, between two aspects of one Reality, between two life-streams, between at least two aspects, and among more than seven principles, so that we should unite will and understanding, synthesize and lead on to the One. Then the alchemical, mystic rose comes into flower and the Star of the Magi leads us to the Ancient Wisdom; which is always of the present day. We have received the age-old wisdom from our Elder Brethren so that we should pass it on unfalsified to coming generations in pictures and words and forms that enlighten all those who wish to understand. Barely a hundred years ago, the Elder Brethren drew close to us and made themselves understandable through H. P. Blavatsky, although the form of expression appropriate to the Masters is surely wordless... The Voice of the Silence... inaudible sound. Reality does not reveal itself to those who merely exist, but to the living, the watchful, the prepared. Only in a condition of inner watchfulness can Reality be discovered, and Truth illumines the path only for those who live it, who realize it, and always in that way discovered by him, in that way appropriate to him, without self-deception.

### ISRAEL

This outpost of Theosophy has existed for twenty years, and now has about 90 members. They held their first Summer School last year in the peaceful atmosphere of the Galilee area. It was attended by 30 people, and lectures on Theosophy, Yoga, Reality, etc., were given in Hebrew, German and English. As the experiment was considered a success, it is hoped to organize another Summer School this year on a larger scale.

## In Perspective

### Common Market

WHEN people or peoples of clashing views or interests cease to communicate with each other, no solution of difficulties is possible. There is stalemate; and in international affairs, stalemate easily degenerates into hostility, or greater hostility. That was the position in Europe before the present series of talks began some months ago on Britain's latest application to join the Economic Community. Though no agreement has yet been reached on many points of difference, and some formidable barriers remain, talks continue. And so long as there is talking there is hope. Negotiations—bargaining, compromise—to try to reconcile opposing interests are not likely, it seems, to reach finality, one way or the other, for a considerable time yet. This is possibly a good thing.

Whether or no the Common Market is expanded to include Britain and other countries, one thing is certain; the discussions have widened the outlook of its present members and brought before them some of the problems of the world beyond Europe, which Europe cannot ignore. Excellent. This is the prerequisite for any healthy future development that has been emphasized many times in these columns. So we wait and see. But we know that, whichever way the decision goes, some expansion of view has taken place, and that by itself is a distinct, though small, step forward towards universality.

### Strikes

Various countries are suffering from a rash of strikes. These disrupt manufacture and trade and frequently inflict hardship on the community. The strike weapon was a necessary implement for oppressed and underpaid workers to force employers to provide better pay and conditions; and in some lands it still fulfils that function of checking exploitation. But in some places a new phenomenon has arisen in the trade union movement: the unofficial strike, a variant of which is the walk-out on the spur of the moment over some often trivial grievance, real or imagined—commonly called a 'wild cat' strike. The strike is based on the motto 'Unity is strength.' Yet these new strikes break that unity. For they may constitute a revolt against their leaders and their advice. Formerly also, arbitration was an accepted way of finding a solution to the conflict, but this is by no means always so today. Disputes between unions, leading to stoppages, are likewise fairly common.

This malaise in the unions and between employers or managers and workers usually shows itself in demands regarding wages and hours, but the real cause probably lies much deeper. Automation has not yet freed men. It still keeps them as cogs in organizational machines, hands on the production line, and so forth. Workers do not make things, often even not parts of things. There is no scope for creativity—too many jobs are soulless. And the ever-growing size of modern undertakings makes it more and more difficult for management to treat men as warm human beings, even supposing it wants to.

All this is part of the churning-up that is going on all over the world in all institutions and affairs: part of the preparation for the new impulse that is said to come towards the end of each century to try to help mankind a little further along the evolutionary path. Only too often, after all the painful labour, the child that is born grows up to be but a puny creature. Let us hope that this time the newborn, when it comes, will be strong and grow into a healthy and vigorous one. Never before can there have been such widespread ferment. Man collectively has always been incredibly slow in moving. But the extraordinary history of this unique 20th century leads one eminent psychologist, at any rate, to expect much: 'It is not often given to men to see a world expire and then possibly to see a new order struggle into being.'

L.H.L.S.

We should like to put on record our appreciation and thanks to our printers, who have handled all the preliminary work, including communication between London and Folkestone, with speed and efficiency, during the postal strike in England, which lasted for 6½ weeks.



## 95th International Convention

ADYAR, DECEMBER, 1970

The European Federation was well represented at Adyar this year by Mr. Curt Berg and Mr. Geoffrey Farthing, General Secretaries of Sweden and England, Mr. John Coats, Mr. V. W. Slater, Mrs. Birgitte Valvanne, Mrs. Anna Viking and Mr. Winde, as well as other representatives from Belgium, France, Holland, Italy, Switzerland and Yugoslavia.

The President opened the Convention by pointing out that such a gathering could be a harmonious meeting of as many streams of influence as there were members present, all in a spirit of peace, friendliness and harmony. The attendance this year was 826. Referring to the approach to the end of the hundred year cycle he reminded us that the Society at any given time consists of its members, and its character is determined by them, and not solely by its objects. Those who look for a new influx of life must prepare themselves for it.

Members were able to see how the new Library, opened in 1967, had settled down. The quarters formerly occupied by the Library now accommodated the Museum and some of the archives. This Convention saw the opening of new premises for the Vāsanta Press. The original Vāsanta Press building was dedicated by Annie Besant in 1908. With this inspiring tradition from the past, the new building with its modern equipment should be able to take care of the increasing demand for theosophical books throughout the world. Miss Joy Mills, National President of the Theosophical Society in America, referred to the close links that existed among the three Theosophical Publishing Houses, Adyar, Wheaton and London, and the value of T.P.H. Adyar having its own press.

The six Convention Lectures covered a wide range of subjects. Mr. N. Sri Ram, President, spoke on **THE OTHER INDIA**, pointing out the unique position of the traditional Indian way of life expressing an ageless Spirit, austere, serene and pure. This unfortunately is rapidly disappearing but the tradition can still give inspiration to the world at large. Mrs. Rukmini Arundale, on the title **GOD WITHIN AND WITHOUT**, emphasized that there can be no realization of God within until we recognize in all beings the God without, and translate theoretical Theosophy into a way of life. Mr. J. S. Perkins, Vice-President, dealt with man and his environment under the title **POLARIZED TO REALITY**, which he elaborated as movement of consciousness at all levels in the direction of the reality of the self, ever returning to equilibrium in the wholeness within. **THE KINGLY SECRET**, by Mr. F. L. Kunz, was taken from *The Bhagavad Gita*, Chapter IX; modern science has demonstrated the reality of non-material continual force fields and is extending the idea to biology and psychology. Miss Joy Mills on **NOW IS THE TIME TO BE HUMAN** made a case, illustrated by examples from world problems, for man to avert his own self-destruction by learning to behave not as animals or machines, but as responsible human beings with a monadic mandate. In **RACES, CIVILIZATIONS, CULTURES**, by Mr. V. W. Slater, indicated by documentation from *The Secret Doctrine* that the races on the earth at the present time cannot be catalogued in terms of third, fourth and fifth Root Races according to present colour, black, red - yellow and brown - white. Humanity cannot be divided into superior and inferior races. An individual is not limited by such an arbitrary classification.

Instead of the short lectures of former Conventions we had a Symposium on **SCIENCE IN RELATION TO TRUTH** (Mr. G. A. Farthing, Mrs. Virginia Hanson and Mrs. Dora Kunz); discussion groups on **RELIGION IN ITS TRUE NATURE OR AS A MATTER OF BELIEF**, followed by a general symposium on the subject; and a spontaneous discussion on **YOUTH AND THE FUTURE**.

The value of this international gathering lies in the contacts between members from all over the world. Above all there is the spirit of Adyar itself which brings members together in a manner that is beyond words.

V. W. SLATER

Thomas Vaughan:  
Theosophy's Apostle  
in the 17th Century

BY D. JEFFREY WILLIAMS

Thomas and Henry Vaughan were twin brothers, born at Llansaintffraed, in Brecknockshire, Wales, in 1622. Thomas, who became a Fellow of Jesus College, Oxford, has been described as a mystic, and wrote *On Magic and Alchemy* under the pseudonym Eugenius Philalethes. The works of Thomas Vaughan were edited for the Theosophical Society in England by A. E. Waite in 1919.

Henry was also educated at Oxford and settled as a physician at Brecon and Newton-on-Usk. His position among English poets is regarded as not only high, but in some respects unique, and two poems, *The Retreat*, and *They have gone into the World of Light*, are regarded as ranking among the finest in the language.

The following are some sentences from Thomas Vaughan's writings which can be pondered:

From *Anima Magica Abscondita*: Learn to refer all naturals to their spirituals by way of secret analogy. Have therefore a charitable, seraphic soul . . . Settle not in the lees and puddles of the world; have thy heart in heaven and thy hands on earth. Ascend in piety and descend in charity, for this is the nature of light and the way of the children of it.

Thou must prepare thyself till thou art conformable to Him Whom thou would'st entertain, and that in every respect . . . When thou hast thus set thy house in order, do not think thy Guest will come without invitation. Thou must tire Him out with pious importunities. Truth is the arcanum, the mystery and essence of all things; for every secret is a truth and every substantial truth is a secret. Truth can no sooner step abroad but some sophister or other flings dirt in her face.

Anticipate the year in the day and lose not a day in the year. Learn from thy errors to be infallible, from thy perseverance, for it ends in miracles. Many there are who bestow not their thoughts on God till the world fails them . . . Do thou think on Him first and He will speak to thy thoughts at last.

From *Magica Adamica*: Verily, a true faith consists not in reason but in love.

To give an experienced testimony of actions more ancient than ourselves is a thing impossible for us, unless we could look into that glass where all occurrences may be seen—past, present and to come.

From *Lumen de Lumine*: Unite the end to the beginning, like a flame to a coal; for God is superlatively one and He hath no second. Consider then what you seek: you seek an indissoluble, miraculous, transmuting union; but such a tie cannot be without the First Unity. 'To create,' saith one, 'and transmute essentially and naturally, or without any violence, is the only proper office of the First Power, the First Wisdom, and the First Love.' Without this love, the elements will never be married; they will never inwardly and essentially unite, which is the end and perfection of Magic. Study then to understand this, and when thou hast performed, I will allow thee that test of Mekkubalim: 'Thou hast understood in wisdom, and thou has been wise in understanding; thou hast established this thing upon the pure elements thereof, and thou hast posited the Creator in His throne.'

The soul dwells not where she lives, but where she loves. We are employed in a perpetual contemplation of the absent Beauty. It is a spirit that can do wonders, and now let us see if there be any possibility to come at him. Suppose then we should dilapidate or discompose some artificial building, stone by stone; there is no question but we should come at last to the earth whereupon it is founded. It is just so in Magic: if we open any natural body and separate all the parts thereof, one from another, we shall come at last to the Prester (or Fire) which is the Candle and Secret Light of God.

## Are we really free?

BY SYLVI HORSTIO

The members of the Theosophical Society often proudly say that when joining the Society it is not necessary to believe in any dogmas, and that it does not matter whether you do or do not belong to a religious community or that you believe in reincarnation, the existence of the Masters, etc., as most members of the Society do. The only thing a member is supposed to approve is universal brotherhood towards everybody and everything. We say, and really believe in what we say, that the Theosophical Society is a free union of seekers after truth, which promotes brotherhood and tries to serve mankind.

But how is it? Are we able to be free and let all the others have this same freedom, even in external matters? Do we realize what freedom means to ourselves and to our neighbours?

When we take a certain person in any country, in any conditions, with or without book knowledge, etc., we always find that he is bound by numerous prejudices, beliefs, hopes and sorrows that prevent him from living even externally a happy life free from anxiety. The person who is spiritually free or who realizes the existence of an inner freedom which can be consciously lived is rare, and as Palakrishna says in his book *Freedom here and now*, spiritual bondage and lack of inner freedom, are much worse than exterior slavery. When can man realize this inner freedom? I would say that this is possible when he has felt the slavery and dependence, but has at least in some degree become free from his prejudices and dependencies, or has noticed that they influence his life.

We ought, therefore, first of all to realize that we live in spiritual bondage and dependence, so that we should be able to strive to get rid of it in order to be free. This means that we have to realize that the exterior circumstances we believe to be necessary for our happiness are dictated by the opinions of the environment in which we live, and by our own dependence on them.

Poets are sometimes prophets, as they work at the level of creation, and they do, therefore, see things which normal people usually do not think of at all. The Finnish poet, J. H. Erkkö, has said: "Happiness does not come when you seek it, it only comes when you live it; happiness does not come from outside, it arises from your heart, if it arises." This is what we learn in our theosophical teachings: happiness which is attained through exterior things never lasts. It only makes a man happy for a moment, for the moment in which the object that has been waited and longed for is obtained, but very soon after the fulfilment of this wish the mind begins to want new things it believes to be necessary for happiness.

The search for exterior things is thus one reason for our dependence, and there are hundreds of these reasons for it!

We think we know what Theosophy means, which opinions are correct, which rules are to be followed. We may, for example, discuss the question, whether it is right or not to pray. When doing so we must not forget that everybody has his own truth which is important to him, which he understands and which has become clear to him. If praying is necessary to him, if he longs for the feeling of security praying gives him, and if he is helped by prayers, let him pray! If he feels it to be unnecessary to appeal to someone or something above him for comfort and guidance, let that be his way! Everybody has to tread his own path, to follow his own conception in trying to find the truth, or, to put it more modestly, the beginning of the path. This difference by no means implies that somebody is a good theosophist and the other one not, or that he is a developed person and the different one an undeveloped man.

We may, however, perhaps in a discussion, give somebody spiritual raw material to which he then gives the final shape and possibly makes for himself a new conception which may broaden his present view of life. To this extent the result of our own experiences may be of help to others.

It is, no doubt, due to our egoism that we adopt a defensive attitude. We feel it is most important that our opinion is the one which should be respected, that we have understood a question correctly, that we are right. Everything would be easier if we saw in each other a pilgrim brother who treads the same stony and difficult path, who stumbles as we do, who sometimes succeeds in avoiding a stone on the path as we do. My pilgrim brother may want to have a rest while I prefer to go on, but he, perhaps, wants to proceed when I like to pick flowers or to follow a butterfly's flight. As he, however, walks along with me, I have no right to say when he is right and when he is wrong, whether he has comprehended some question correctly, whether he is a developed or an undeveloped person. He has the right to his own ways, quite the same right as I have.

The well-known theosophical worker, Mrs. Adelaide Gardner, went so far in this question as to say: "Don't let anything, not even the Theosophical Society become so dear a home by the side of the path you tread that you cannot leave it." The Society was, of course, dear to her, as she gave her whole life to Theosophy, but she obviously meant that the Theosophical Society must never be a purpose of its own. If we, therefore, believe that our conception of truth is being expressed better by any other movement, we must have the courage to leave it in order to seek the truth in the direction we see it, and should any of our pilgrim brothers find his truth elsewhere, in a different way from ours, we must let him go his own path. We must even realize that the way he is going is as good as ours. Our president, N. Sri Ram, has, on several occasions, mentioned that it is not at all important on which platform and under which name Theosophy is taught. The fact that it is taught somewhere is the important thing. This means that Theosophy, in other words, God's wisdom, may sometimes be taught in its purest form on some other than a theosophical platform. We must always remember that Theosophy, God's wisdom, has always existed, while the Theosophical Society is only its present-day expression. H.P.B. wrote: "Theosophy is like a wide ocean and the Theosophical Society is just a bubble on its surface." I, therefore, feel that we ought to be able to approve the differing opinions of our neighbours, and even to cooperate with groups having similar principles. It is not important who is more right, who is nearer the truth, the only thing which matters is how we can best serve mankind.

There is nowadays very much talk of freedom, individual freedom, freedom of nations, etc. But have the people who talk of freedom a clear conception what the exterior freedom they claim really means? I believe that the freedom which they are proclaiming means very often only rejecting old biases and dependencies in order to make room for new ones. So long as we believe we know exactly what each one needs, what makes him happy, we do not have the right idea of what freedom really means. Even exterior freedom is a disciplined state, because when living in human society we have to pay attention both to the rights of the individual and to the standards of the society in which we live. Each one of us goes his own way towards his own individual freedom, after he has become free from his biases and dependence. Real inner freedom must be sought and found by everybody individually.

"Together differently," said President Arundale. It is just this difference, the difference of parts which form the unity, and the understanding of the unity for which we strive. Perhaps when we let others have their own freedom, and have ourselves the courage to leave something which has before been the basis of our faith and conception of life, we take the first step towards the freedom from that dependence which may hide the truth from our eyes. We must not continuously

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## Why Theosophy?

EXTRACTS FROM A SYMPOSIUM AT THE SUMMER SCHOOL IN ST. ANDREWS

**Miss J. Carstairs:** Theosophy gives an account of the nature of the Universe and of man's place within it: it offers a cosmology, a metaphysics, a psychology and from these, an ethic. Theosophy is therefore seen as the One Life flowing through everything.

We have to go to the East for spiritual enlightenment. Take Tibet, the last living link that connects us with earlier civilizations. Due to its natural isolation and inaccessibility, Tibet has succeeded not only in preserving but keeping alive the traditions of the most distant past, the knowledge of the hidden forces of the human soul and the highest achievements and esoteric teachings of Indian saints and sages.

Humanity today stands at the crossroads of great decisions. Before it lies the path of Power, through control of the forces of nature, a path leading to enslavement and destruction, and the Path of Enlightenment, through control of the forces within us, leading to liberation and Self-realization, for Service. The choice rests with each individual. Right thought, emphasised by the Lord Buddha, leads to true wisdom and the sacred mysteries enshrined in nature and in man. The Arabian alchemist, Abipili, states: "I admonish thee, whoever thou art, who desirest to dive into the innermost parts of Nature, if that thou seekest thou findest not within thee, thou wilt never find it without thee. If thou knowest not the excellence of thine own house, why dost thou seek after the excellence of other things? O, man, in thee is hid the TREASURE OF TREASURES."

If our inner perception is right we would speak and act from the spark of Divinity, as distinct from the personality. Young people today are seeking for an understanding of the purpose of life: a challenge to us. Are we helping the younger generations to build and hold true values or are we adding to their difficulties by our carelessness? Judas, the betrayer, the lower mind, must be transmuted to the Christ principle within, and discrimination used dispassionately to search the heart.

H. P. Blavatsky wrote that the "essence of Theosophy is the perfect harmonizing of the Divine with the human in man, the adjustment of his godlike qualities and aspirations and their sway over the terrestrial or animal passions in him."

**Mr. H. Edgar:** The question WHY is one of the great questions which has dominated men's minds since he became articulate. It has been said he who knows does not talk, he who talks does not know, so obviously we do not know. In the entrance hall here at St. Andrews I came across some remarks by a scientist on the question "WHY" and after giving many scientific observations he concluded by saying, "We should not only look for the answer in a scientific way, but there should be moments when we ought to ponder on the 'Philosophical Why' even though we may never find the answer." In writing this way surely he was saying there was a force or power beyond the answers science provided.

When we think of Theosophy we see it as an unresolvable subject about which opinions are often causing confusion so that we are seeking knowledge of it, but if we thought of it in relation to people, of whom we are part, and applied the law, "Love is the fulfilling of the Law," would we have the world in the state it is today? Man seems to be doing his best to destroy himself, our Church leaders and statesmen appear to have long given up the struggle against materialism and the mass of people are blinded by their possessions and toys. There is much hatred, bigotry and intolerance in the world, but we must see all men as one. The time must come when we will all work together, each nation and people working for the benefit of the whole, and in the field of religion, not many, but one Universal Religion, not based on men's ideas but on Truth. We as aspiring theosophists know these truths and though we are a small minority we can leaven the atmosphere with higher thoughts, we can and should maintain the spirit of goodwill, love and understanding. We are in effect the forerunners, the Watchers. We should be among the

builders who are going to take a definite part in the reorganisation and reconstruction which is so necessary at this present time.

But having got so far how do we ourselves present our Theosophy? There is no reason why we should not be happy in it. As Robert Louis Stevenson said: "A happy man or woman is a better thing to find than a £5 note, he or she is a radiating focus of goodwill and their entrance into a room is as though another candle had been lighted."

Let us go out of our closed circles, our ivory towers. It is in our living that we demonstrate how much Theosophy we have built into ourselves. If we can show what a vital force it is, as did the Masters and founders of this Society, there will be no need to ask the question "WHY THEOSOPHY."

It will speak for itself.

**Mrs. B. Nyssens:** Each one of us became a theosophist because we went through some experiences in life by which we discovered Theosophy or found it again. Evolution makes a gradual opening of human understanding possible. At first a very faint murmur is heard when the soul speaks long forgotten words of its past lives. Slowly universal remembrance emerges from the depth of human knowledge, to burst open as a magnificent coloured firework, once the heart has discarded its egoistical sheath.

This is Theosophy, universal love. It is the great teaching of Christ, for He proclaims: 'Man is spirit, the eternal child of the Father.'

The true theosophist does not care only for his own spiritual progress, he expands his consciousness to partake in the suffering and joy of every human being. Love means force. As a tiny seed contains the small bud and lovely flowers to be, so love breeds in darkness to burst open in the full sunshine of life. Go to the heart of a plant, a tree, and feel life running through them. You are the plant, the tree, the bird in the sky, the wind and the rain, you are all one and the same life. Love means light and aspiration and is a huge flame in loving hearts. Such loving hearts can set the world on fire. The flame of love must burn in the heart of every theosophist, and aspiration to it is an occult force.

Trials may strike us, despair visit our minds, but where love is present the divine light always shines through.

Yoga is not merely physical postures or breathing exercises, it is a hard way of living, clearing the human mind, leading man through the garden of experiences to the castle of God. Before one can tread the path of initiation, all egoistical desire must be left behind. This is a cruel condition indeed, but the only one, for asceticism leads the mind to wisdom. When the barriers of selfishness have all been taken down, one after another, slowly but surely, when desire has been quenched by years of meditation, only then may wisdom penetrate the mind.

Science has made marvellous discoveries on the origin of life and the evolution of cells, but the nucleus of life still remains hidden to the human eye. If scientists could look farther than outer manifestations, and pierce through the screen of transparent ever-changing matter, they would see that thought is as swift as atomic force, that feelings travel on wings of sound. Science and metaphysics are very close together, and together they could make the wisdom of the future. The life of the soul is ready to bloom when science admits that life is divine, the eternal spark of cosmic fire.

Brotherhood has never before been so active as in this century. There is again great misery in the world, but the idea of brotherhood has been given and goes on since the foundation of the Theosophical Society. The Cosmic Fire of Universal Mind with His great creative power, with whom we are linked on one or another level of the soul or causal body or higher mind, this Cosmic Fire is now in tremendous activity. We begin to find contact with Him if we detach ourselves from the moods of the personality, and then make contact, more or less consciously, with the Divine Plan.

## The Yoga of Action

EXTRACTS FROM SEEKING WISDOM, PP. 209 TO 211, BY N. SRI RAM

Let us consider what action means and implies. A person may be exceedingly active in the pursuit of some object to which he is dedicated. He may go on from year to year, yet feel at the end of those years that he has not achieved anything important, that what he has done is but a drop in the ocean. He may even feel within himself a sense of frustration and discontent. But if the action is of the right quality, it should not give rise to such a feeling; the feeling arises because the action has been largely superficial, formal or mechanical.

That is what the Yoga of Action may become if it is not rightly understood — going round and round, doing the same old things, perhaps not even better than originally; because as we go on, we tend to become more tired; we have to force ourselves to do whatever is to be done, and do not have the original zest and intensity. When action becomes mechanical, it loses its grace, it becomes lifeless and extremely limited in its effect. Such action, although it may seem to be altruistic or geared to an exalted end, may be subtly or even blatantly egoistic. So long as one feels important in the work, he is apt to be enthusiastic about it and extremely energetic.

Everyone around him may say: 'What a good worker, he does not spare himself.' But behind his action there may be all the time a subtle feeling of self-importance, the feeling, 'How well I do these things, there is no one else who can do as well.' Such a feeling may lurk at the back of the mind and keep him going but when the person has no longer the position he has held, his enthusiasm will sag, he may even feel completely lost without that position. His enthusiasm depended evidently upon his having it, upon his having the feeling that his is the most important work of all. We must become aware of such faults in our own mentality, and eliminate them in order to be really good workers, effective from the standpoint of the results, seen and unseen, that ensue from our action.

The teaching in the *Gita* is Action without desire for its fruit. If you do not desire the fruit of your action, not even its success, then why should the action be performed at all, what is the urge or motive behind it? It has to be action for its own sake, because you think it right to perform it; the doing of it has its own value; it does not matter whether it is crowned with immediate success or not. It is an extremely rare individual who can act with great intensity, force and enthusiasm, without desiring anything at all for himself, neither money, position, praise, nor even any secret gratification that one may feel as an inner reaction to the ability he displays.

Performance of action because it is right and good and desirable implies the presence of an inner sense that guides the person to it. Wisdom is needed so to guide him. A person may say with some satisfaction, 'I do it as my duty.' But is it really his duty, or only a conventional notion he has, of what he should do, being in his position? Possibly he feels that if he does not do it, he will fall in the estimation of others. If what is called duty is performed grudgingly, with a feeling of compulsion, then that action has no grace. A person may have to attend a patient, be awake at all hours of the night, to minister to various physical needs. But if he does all that with a feeling of bitter necessity, which may even breed animosity, we cannot say that the action has the right quality.

It is only action freely and wholeheartedly rendered which is really beautiful. One acts in this manner when there is love, and then it is action with one's whole being, not only a portion of that being. Action does not consist only in specific, overt acts, like performing some task or a religious ceremony, attending to various points in it; that becomes just a procedure. All of life's expressions, at whatever level, are action, a truth which needs to be understood to see the picture completely. Thought is action; when one meditates, that is action; and as J. Krishnamurti points out, listening with complete attention is also action.

## EUROPEAN CONGRESS

The European Congress will be held in Paris from 8th to 15th August. Bookings will be accepted until 30th June. Applications for a booking form should be sent to the Chairman, Mrs. Claire Wyss, Bruderholzstr. 88, 4000 Basle, Switzerland, or to your own General Secretary (enclosing a stamped addressed envelope). The booking form contains full information about accommodation.

## SUMMER SCHOOLS

Netherlands (Huizen): 28th May to 18th June.

Iceland: 11th to 16th June.

Finland: 25th June to 4th July.

Sweden: 4th to 11th July.

England: 30th July to 6th August.

Denmark: August (exact dates not yet known).

Young Theosophists: 21st July to 4th August.

There is to be an International Round Table Camp at Tekels Park, Camberley, England, from 24th to 31st July next.

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knowledge of the whole complex occult constitution of the human being, we shall not be able to give the appropriate education at each stage of the development of human consciousness.

We must also learn to understand the bonds existing between ourselves and our younger brothers; even the so-called 'lower kingdoms' have the right to receive help in their evolution, just as man in his turn received it from the Hierarchies above; and it is through this that he has been able to develop the thinking faculty, a faculty which will allow him to reach the highest realizations inherent in the spirit.

The wonderful scientific development attained by the human mind has brought enormous possibilities, both creative and destructive, to the individual, and this immense power could well lead to the destruction of the planet itself. However, against these material and destructive forces, spiritual and still more powerful ones are arrayed, that point out to humanity the way to follow. The superior forces of good will certainly prevail, and if all those who are aware of the position will do their duty, we need have no fear of contrary forces or ideas opposed to our own.

We have to learn to develop in ourselves the spiritual forces of good. We often think that we can change others, and do not bear in mind that the most important and necessary thing is first of all to change ourselves, because the race can only be improved by improving the individual.

All these Truths have been given out in order to help Humanity, the Great Orphan! Instead of passing judgement upon others, each of us must judge himself, and if we all do our duty, if we become givers of love, if we realise this love in ourselves, we shall really become capable of helping our brothers.

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stare at some conception or vision which may have in its time made a certain question clear to us. We must have the courage to leave it, to question everything so that our beliefs and conceptions do not resemble a stagnant pond, but a continuously flowing stream of life, where the many happenings of life are always reflected.

Only when we reach this freedom and allow it to our brother in both outer and inner things, can we begin to realize the oneness for which we strive. This freedom is followed by an inner peace, a peace which does not depend on exterior conditions, which we can find even in the chaos of exterior things, in the everyday greyness, in a concentration camp, in the darkness of a prison. It is the peace "which passes understanding, it abides in the hearts of those who live in the eternal."